

**WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS ACCREDITATION POLICY**  
**WVU-Morgantown, Divisional Campuses, Other Locations, and Dual Credit Sites**

As West Virginia's land-grant flagship university, faculty who teach courses will have appropriate discipline-specific credentials to qualify as experts in course subjects. They will also effectively communicate knowledge and skills in those subjects to their students in a manner that will position the students for success not only in a particular class, but also in their academic program and their careers after completing their program. Faculty will provide appropriate documentation (vitae, official degree transcripts, certifications, or professional licenses) to document their qualification as content experts in all course sections taught.

**DEFINITIONS**

Instructor of Record (IOR)

Refers to a WVU faculty member assigned to teach specific credit-generating course sections in WVU's Student Information System.

Minimally Qualified Faculty Member

An IOR who:

- a) Engages professionally with colleagues regarding the learning objectives for program graduates;
- b) Possesses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions appropriate to the credential awarded;
- c) Possesses the ability to acquire, apply, and integrate broad learning and skills integral to academic programs; and
- d) Demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning.

Credentials

Refer to earned academic degrees, certifications, and professional licenses which establish IOR credibility as a content expert. Academic degrees and certificates are the *predominant* bases for determining if an IOR is a Minimally Qualified Faculty Member. Specifically, degrees and certificates from institutions of higher education that are recognized either by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or by the U.S. Department of Education or both, and professional licenses from national or state approved licensing boards provide evidence of appropriate credentialing. Credentials are used to validate appropriateness of specific course assignments for faculty IORs based on programs-of-study and subfields within their academic disciplines.

Tested Experience

Defined as breadth and depth of experience outside of the classroom in *real-world situations* relevant to the discipline, may be substituted as an equivalent to an earned credential or portions thereof, if approved through the faculty governance process at the unit level and assessed by means of well-defined procedures and an agreed upon rubric to ensure consistency in its application. Tested Experience is the secondary base for determining if an IOR is a Minimally Qualified Faculty Member (e.g. Integrated Marketing Communications and Executive MBA degrees) using field practitioners and department prescribed syllabi.

### Exception Criteria

Are well-defined policies, procedures, and documentation required when using Tested Experience as a basis for hiring faculty. Exception Criteria must demonstrate that such experience is sufficient to determine that the faculty member has the content expertise necessary to teach students in that discipline or for particular courses.

### **MINIMUM FACULTY CREDENTIALS**

*These are the minimum standards; academic units may adopt more rigorous requirements as required by specialized accreditation.*

IORs teaching in *technical* college-level certificate programs and applied associate degree programs should hold a bachelor's degree in the field or a combination of education, training and tested experience equivalent to a bachelor's degree. Training and tested experience for instruction of technical and occupational courses is particularly relevant in fields where the associate's degree is the terminal degree, or where there is no degree beyond a high school diploma. In these cases, appropriate qualifications such as professional certificates and recognition will be identified as appropriate. This may be applicable even in instances where technical or occupational courses may transfer into an applied bachelor's degree program.

IORs teaching *baccalaureate courses*, including general education foundations (GEF), dual credit or other non-occupational courses, normally must hold at least a master's degree or equivalent in the discipline. If an IOR holds at least a master's degree or equivalent in the discipline other than that in which they are teaching, the IOR must have completed a minimum of 18 graduate credit hours in the respective discipline or subfield.

If an IOR has *not* achieved 18 graduate credit hours in the discipline in which the IOR teaches, each instance must meet Exception Criteria and receive prior approval through the faculty governance process at the unit level to begin or continue teaching college courses.

If a dual credit IOR teaching a baccalaureate-level, credit-generating course for high school students has obtained a Master of Education degree, but not a master's degree in a discipline (English, History, Mathematics, etc.), the courses taken by the IOR must be equivalent to 18 credits in the discipline or subfield of the dual credit course. High school teaching experience will not be accepted as a substitute for the content knowledge needed for discipline-specific college courses, or for discipline-specific experience.

IORs teaching in a *graduate program* should hold the terminal degree determined by the discipline and have a record of research, scholarship, or achievement appropriate for the graduate program.

IORs guiding *doctoral education* should have a record of scholarship and preparation to teach at the doctoral level. Research and scholarship should be appropriate to the program and degree offered.

IORs teaching in disciplines that require *licensure and/or certification* are responsible to provide documentation of licensure and certification. It is the responsibility of an IOR to acquire and

maintain discipline-required licensure(s)/certification(s). The institution may periodically request updated documents from its faculty members to maintain credentialing records.

IORs must provide an official transcript with their terminal degree posted if appropriate within one (1) year of appointment.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: QUALITY, RESOURCES, AND FACULTY SUPPORT**

Current IORs not in compliance with this procedure are required to develop and submit a Professional Development Plan and timeline for achieving compliance to their chairs and/or deans for approval. This plan will be uploaded for inclusion in the annual update to their Digital Measures evaluation file, along with the required Professional Continuous Improvement Plan outlining goals designed to assure currency in their respective teaching disciplines, including the application of innovative discipline-based teaching methodologies and the assessment of student learning.

**DESIGNATED REPOSITORY FOR FACULTY CREDENTIALS**

West Virginia University's colleges, departments, and programs shall assure that all faculty credentials are collected and retained at the appropriate unit level in the WVU Faculty Activity Reporting System, Digital Measures or its successor.